

Subject: All CPF E-mail – BEST Phone Number Update

Sent: Friday, 18 February 2005

The purpose of this E-mail is to provide you with an important update regarding the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) employee line telephone number. As you know, in Nov 03 the new Air Force Customer Service Center 1-800 number was established as a part of the Air Force Personnel Service Delivery Transformation (formerly Customer Transformation) effort. This number, 1-800-616-3775, was available for all Stateside employees to use; however, this number was not yet available to customers in foreign areas.

Foreign area callers can now call the Air Force Customer Service Center 1-800 number by dialing the applicable AT&T Direct Access Number for the country they are in, then the new "up-front" phone number, 800-616-3775. Here's how employees located in foreign areas will reach the new 1-800 number from outside the U.S.:

(1) Find the AT&T Direct Access Number for the country you are in on the AT&T web site at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.

(2) Select the country from which dialing -- and note the corresponding AT&T Direct Access Number. For example, Germany is 0-800-2255-288, Italy is 800-172-444.

(3) Make sure you have an outside line and dial the AT&T Direct Access Number.

(4) An English-language voice prompt or an AT&T Operator will ask you to enter the number you are calling.

(5) Enter 800-616-3775. There is no need to dial "1" before the number.

After dialing (800) 616-3775, customers will hear "Welcome and thank you for calling the Air Force Customer Service Center." To access benefits, press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then 2 for BEST benefits and entitlements services, and follow the prompts. Currently, the system takes employees to the Air Force Personnel Center system and voicing, but within a few months we hope to load an improvement to the phone system that will take employees directly to the social security and BEST personal identification number (PIN) module.

A copy of the publicity article is attached for your review and use, as well as the current BEST Telephone Menu, which provides dialing instructions and assistance, including how to reach a benefits counselor.

Hearing impaired employees with access to TDD equipment will continue to contact benefits counselors by dialing toll-free 1-800-382-0893, or if located within the San Antonio, Texas area, commercial 210-565-2276.

After 31 Mar 05, the old BEST phone numbers, 800-997-2378 and local 210-527-2378, will no longer be available to employees, regardless of their location. Employees who dial the old numbers after 31 Mar 05 will hear a message voicing the new 800-616-3775 number. We're in the process of updating marketing materials to reflect the BEST phone number information, especially for customers in foreign areas. Please revise any marketing materials you may have to reflect the updated BEST phone number information.

As always, we appreciate your continued support.

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Division Chief, Benefits and Entitlements

Attachments:

1. Publicity Article
2. BEST Telephone Menu

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Phone numbers change for Air Force civilian services

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – Current and potential civilian employees in foreign areas now have the same access to the Air Force Customer Service Center that stateside employees have enjoyed since November 2003.

Current employees can now contact the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team automated phone systems by first dialing the toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country they are in, then the “up-front” number, (800) 616-3775. Potential employees can also reach the Recruitment Service Center at the same number.

Additionally, after March 31 the old BEST and internal employment numbers, (800) 997-2378 and local 527-2378, as well as the old external employment numbers at (800) 699-4473, local 527-2377 will no longer be available. Customers will receive a voice message directing them to the (800) 616-3775.

The following dialing instructions are for Air Force-serviced civilian employees located in foreign areas:

- Find the AT&T Direct Access Number for their country on the AT&T Web site at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.
- Select the country from which they are dialing and note the corresponding AT&T Direct Access Number.
- Ensure they have an outside line.
- Dial the direct access number for that country. For example, in Germany it is 0-800-2255-288; Italy is 800-172-444.
- An English-language voice prompt or an AT&T operator will ask for the number the employee is calling.
- Enter (800) 616-3775. There is no need to dial "1" before the toll-free number.
- After dialing the toll-free number, customers will hear “Welcome and thank you for calling the Air Force Customer Service Center.”

BEST customers should press option 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employees, then 2 for benefits and entitlements services, and follow the prompts.

Internal applicants for civilian employment should press option 2, then 1 to be transferred to employment, then choose option 3.

External applicants for civilian employment should press option 6, then 1 to be transferred to employment, then choose either option 2 or 3.

For additional assistance with navigating the BEST phone system, including how to reach a counselor, visit http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/best_telephone_menu.htm.

BEST Telephone Menu

Updated 1 Feb 05

Stateside employees: Dial 1-800-616-3775.

Overseas employees: Dial the toll-free AT&T Direct Access Number for the country you are in, then 800-616-3775. (AT&T direct access numbers are available on the web at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.)

1. When the phone system answers, you will hear **"Welcome, and thank you for calling the Air Force Customer Service Center."** Listen carefully to the menu. Press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then 2 again for BEST benefits and entitlements services.

2. You'll hear two tones and a few seconds of silence while your call is being transferred, then **"Welcome to the Air Force Personnel Center."** Listen carefully to the menu. Press 2 to access the Benefits and Entitlements Services System, then 1 for current Air Force-serviced employee. (Note: We expect to load an update to the phone system in a few months that will delete this extra step.)

3. Listen carefully, you will be prompted **"To enter your SSN and PIN, press 1; if you have forgotten your PIN, press 2."**

- If this is your **first** time accessing the system, after entering your SSN you will hear "please enter your **four-digit** Personal Identification Number or PIN." This is what we like to call your "BEST" or "benefits" PIN." We don't mail PIN numbers, they're automatically assigned when you are hired and are a four-digit number equivalent to your month and year of birth, for example, if born in September 1972, your PIN will be 0972.
- If this is **not** your first time accessing the system, you will hear "please enter your **six-digit** Personal Identification Number or PIN."
- If you have forgotten your PIN, press 2 to reset your PIN, and enter your SSN, date of birth, service computation date for leave, civilian pay plan, grade, and step. (This information can be found on your most recent Leave and Earnings Statement or SF 50.) You will then enter a new six-digit PIN.

4. You'll then hear **"Please hold while we verify this information."**

- If this is your **first** time accessing the system, you will then hear **"Please change your PIN to a six-digit number of your choice."**
- If not your first time accessing the system, you'll hear **"To change your PIN, press 1; to continue, press 2."**

5. You'll then hear **"The current duty phone number on file for you is _____."** If this is correct, press 1, otherwise press 2." (This is your commercial duty phone number, with area code. Overseas employees should exclude their country code.)

6. The system will then voice the benefits main menu, as set forth on the next page. **To contact a benefits counselor**, press the number for the benefits area you are calling about, then zero to transfer to a counselor.

For **Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB)**, press 1

- For general FEHB information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal FEHB information, press 2
- To elect new employee coverage, press 3
- To change from self and family to self only without changing your health plan, press 4
- To make an open season change or election, press 5
- To cancel your FEHB change or election, press 6
- To make a non-open season change or election, press 7
- To obtain a faxed copy of your most recent SF 2809, press 8
- To change your participation in the Premium Conversion program, or to transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Retirement**, press 2

- For general retirement information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal retirement information, press 2. (You may obtain the date you are first eligible for voluntary retirement in the personal information area.)
- For a retirement estimate, press 3
 - For a pre-calculated voluntary retirement estimate, press 1
 - For a real-time on-line estimate, press 2
 - For a TSP monthly annuity estimate, press 3
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)**, press 3

- For personal program information, press 1
- To enroll or change your TSP during open season, press 2
- To make a new employee election, press 3
- To stop your regular contributions to the TSP, press 4
- To elect, change, or stop TSP Catch-Up Contributions, press 5
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)**, press 4

- For general Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal life insurance information, press 2
- To elect new employee coverage, press 3
- To make a non-open season election, change, or termination, press 4
- To make an open season election or change, press 5
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

To request a **Faxed Document**, press 6

To **Exit** the system, press 9